COMMENTS ON FBI SERIALS 97-74-1A4 AND 1A5 - OSWALD'S FPCC LITERATURE

Paul L. Hoc
24 February

The FBI office in New Orleans evidently ignored a specific suggestion to check out Oswald's use of the address 544 Camp Street. The FBI has just released a copy of one of the pamphlets Oswald handed out on August 16, 1963, with that address given for the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

This copy was mailed to the FBI by Jesse Core of the Trade Mart, and received on August 20. Someone has written on the front "Note inside back cover." There, the address is circled, and someone has written what appears to be "ck out." While it is not apparent whether it was Core or someone inside the FBI who pointed out that address, the inside back cover also is marked "105-1095-129," which looks like an FBI file reference; clearly FBI personnel were aware of the 544 Camp address.

Pre-assassination FBI reports do not mention the 544 Camp address, even though many other details (such as the post office box number Oswald used) were checked out. Post-assassination reports concealed the fact that Guy Banister, a former FBI agent with a private investigative/intelligence firm, had an office in that building. It has long been suspected that FBI agents may have known something about Oswald's connection with the Banister operation which was deliberately kept out of the reports.

In October 1969, after protracted correspondence, the FBI sent me the copy of the Corliss Lamont pamphlet which Oswald gave to SA Quigley when he was interviewed after his arrest on August 10; this copy also has the 544 Camp address, but there is no notation indicating that anyone paid any attention to it. The new pamphlet confirms beyond any doubt that the FBI's failure to report on the 544 Camp address is extremely strange.

In addition to this pamphlet, Jesse Core apparently also mailed the FBI one of the "Hands off Cuba" handbills Oswald had given out. The FBI had already gotten one of these handbills on the day of the demonstration. There is nothing about the handbills themselves which is as provocative as the 544 Camp address; however, the post-assassination handling of these two items raises questions in my mind. I have seen the front of both handbills, but the back of only one, and I wonder if the other has any interesting notations. (They might, for example, indicate the presence of an FBI agent at the demonstration.)

Is is clear that statements about these handbills which are at best misleading and maybe completely false were made, both by the New Orleans office to FBIHQ, and by the Justice Department to me. I am trying to get more information to clarify this situation; at present, I will simply present the available information chronologically.

August 16, 1963: Oswald hands out literature in front of the Trade Mart.

On November 29, Jesse Core told the FBI that he watched the activity of Oswald and his associates for about 20 or 25 minutes, and then telephoned the FBI. In a memo of 23 August, SA DeBrueys gave the information provided by Core, noting that Core "has a contractual relationship with the International Trade Mart and is a source of information relative to Latin American matters of the New Orleans [FBI] office." (97-74-67, PLH #1010; Core interview: CD 75, p. 690-2)

We do not know for sure if any FBI agents saw any of this demonstration. That is quite possible, however. The cover slip for 97-74-1A4 describes that item as "1 Hand Bill of FPCC distributed by Lee Harvey Oswald in front of Trade Mart 8/16/63," received 8/16/63, from Jesse Core, by SA's Ernest C. Wall and W. C. DeBrueys.

By the way, I prepared a long list of questions for SA DeBrueys at the request of Senator Schweiker's office a few years ago; I don't know if these questions were ever asked, or what the answers were. Several questions dealt with the 8/16 incident, and DeBrueys' possible presence there (and his general [dis]interest in Oswald).

Also on August 16, at 3:40 p.m., one Ramon Hernandez, a night student at Loyola, brought in one of the handbills to the FBI office. He offered to attend the advertised lectures, and obtain literature; the FBI declined to advise or direct him and said any action he took was "of his own choice and responsibility." (97-74-66 PLH #1009)

Hernandez' name is not familiar to me. For what it's worth, Carlos Quiroga told the Secret Service on November 30 that the FBI had "given him the cold shoulder" when he had told them about Oswald's literature distribution at the Trade Mart. (26H771-2) [Quiroga, who met with Oswald at Carlos Bringuier's suggestion, was apparently also an FBI informant. (CD 75, pp. 705-6, 732a)]

August 19, 1963: Core gives the FBI a description of the two men who had passed out literature. (97-74-67 [PLH #1010]; DeBrueys report, p. 3 [PLH #1012])

August 19 also appears to be the postmark on the envelope in 97-74-1A5, in which Core sent some of Oswald's literature to the FBI. The cover slip in the FBI file indicates that the material was received on August 20, but does not specify what literature it was.

The only literature from 97-74-1A5 which the FBI has just sent me is the Corliss Lamont pamphlet with the 544 Camp address, described above.

November 25, 1963: According to a memo by SA Van Eps (97-74-78, PLH #1018), three handbills were sent to the lab for examination: "One specimen was removed from 97-74, 1A-5."

These 3 handbills are FBI Exhibit D-25 at the Archives; I got copies in 1967. One of them is stamped "L. H. OSWALD / 4907 MAGAZINE ST / NEW ORLEANS, LA." The allegedly matching reverse side bears the notation "97-74 1A5 / Rec 8/20/63 / from / Jesse Core." [I have asked the Archives if they have the original handbills, rather than copies, and if these two sides are from the same one.]

July 8, 1968: Noting the "1A5" marking on this handbill, I submitted an FOIA request for items 1A1 through 1A4. (I referred to the FBI's exhibit envelope pertaining to Oswald, not realizing that there were several.)

December 1, 1969: I resubmitted this request. (I had previously resubmitted it on July 7, 1969, and written about the absence of any response on September 16 and November 22, 1969. On November 28, the Justice Department said they could not locate this request, and asked for another copy. I haven't seen anything from the FBI or JD files about this request, so I could be proven wrong, but I am assuming it was, in fact, simply misplaced innocently.)

December 12, 1969: Bill Branigan (FBIHQ, Division 5) called New Orleans and read the text of my original request. Branigan asked New Orleans to send copies of 1A1 through 1A5, and to send a teletype tonight with descriptions of these exhibits. He specifically asked that New Orleans determine "if 1A5 contains any other exhibit" (even though I had, stupidly, asked only for 1A1 through 1A4). [97-74-104, PLH #1031]

This is where it starts to get confusing. The teletype of December 12 from New Orleans [62-109060-6903, PLH #310] says that the handbill marked 1A5 "is actually exhibit 1A4 received August 16, '63 from Jesse Core."

The teletype then goes on to describe 1A5 as the Corliss Lamont pamphlet, not indicating its source and not indicating any additional items in 1A5. That is, according to this teletype there is only one FPCC handbill in the 97-74 file. (There apparently was a N.O. airtel of 12/12, which I don't have yet.)

December 14, 1969: FBIHQ calls New Orleans again. I don't have anything except the teletype response; evidently HQ asked about the 1A5 mislabeling. New Orleans said that the handbill which was marked on the original (sent to the lab) and on the New Orleans copies as 1A5 "is actually exhibit 1A4 received Aug. 16, '63 from Jesse Core according to exhibit envelopes in New Orleans file. Identification of exhibit 1A5 apparently erroneously recorded on hand bill at time of submission to Bureau. Exhibit 97-74-1A5 is pamphlet entitled "The Crime Against Cuba" by Corliss Lamont received Aug. 20 from Jesse Core and was not sent Bureau." [Teletype of 1:31 p.m., serial illegible; PLH #311]

Again, there seems to be only one handbill. The catch is that the "1A5" handbill in the Archives is stamped "4907 MAGAZINE ST" but the handbill just sent to me as 1A4 is stamped "4907 MAGAZINE" - without the "ST." So, there were two handbills, and I will have to see the reverse of both before I can believe that nothing has been suppressed.

January 9, 1970: The Justice Department wrote me, over Deputy AG Kleindienst's signature. (This reply was presumably based on a memo from the FBI, which I don't have yet.) At the time, I thought the language was just typical legalese, but evidently it was designed to conceal the true situation. I was told that my request for 1A1 through 1A4 "is based upon the fact that you have apparently observed" the 1A5 notation on the handbill I had. "The serials in the 1A category of the file 97-74 which precede the handbill serial do not pertain to Lee Harvey Oswald...." Naturally I read this to mean that 1A1 through 1A4 do not relate to Oswald, and I didn't even bother to appeal.

If I had been told that "1A5" was really 1A4, I probably would have thought of asking for 1A5 (and subsequent relevant serials), which would have uncovered the obviously interesting 544 Camp St. pamphlet. I would assume that the Justice Department person who drafted the letter did believe that the handbill had simply been mislabeled.

The situation regarding the New Orleans FBI office is more suspicious. Was it not obvious to them that two distinct handbills are involved? Was any purpose served by mentioning only one? I have asked for copies of both sides of both handbills, which should establish whether there is anything on the back of one which, perhaps, someone in New Orleans wanted to keep from FBIHQ. (Under the circumstances, someone will have to look at the originals of both handbills, not just alleged copies.)

June 8, 1970: I submitted a request for everything in the 97-74 file relating to Oswald (or to other FPCC activities from April to November 22, 1963). I specified that the only such material I had was the DeBrueys report and the 1A5 handbill.

What I got from this request was absolutely nothing. I don't yet have much of the internal FBI paper relating to this request; I have a memo from the FBI to the JD dated 25 June (97-4196-33-15, sent when I requested my personal file), and a memo of 6/29/70 from SA Ernest C. Wall to the SAC, New Orleans, recording a telephonic request from FBIHQ for "xerox copies of all serials contained in New Orleans file 97-74 for the period 4/1-11/22/63." (97-74-106, PLH #1033)

June 24, 1970: It's getting interesting again. In response to the call from FBIHQ, SA Wall sends serials 65 through 78 (except for 71, the DeBrueys report, which FBIHQ already had). [This includes some post-assassination serials.] However, instead of copies of the 1A exhibits (which I would assume would be covered by the request for all "serials" - but I could be wrong; maybe the FBI doesn't consider 1A exhibits to be serials), Wall sent 4 documents "setting forth information concerning the 1-A exhibits" in 97-74. [97-74-105, PLH #1032]

(These 4 serials, #4462 through 4465, apparently include the teletypes of 12/12/69 and 12/14/69 described above; I should get the other two [which are also dated 12/12 and 12/14].)

I think it would be worthwhile to check both the HQ file and the post-assassination New Orleans files to see how this request was handled. (There are probably copies in the post-assassination Oswald/WC files, which have been released; if not, we will have to go to the FPCC files.)

Kleindienst's denial letter was dated July 22, 1970. He said that there were six withheld items, and that the DeBrueys report "was prepared to cover all information developed in the investigation of Oswald, including the information in the six [withheld] items." Recall that the Core copy of the Lamont pamphlet in 1A5 has the 544 Camp address, which is certainly not covered in the DeBrueys report. My appeal of August 22 was upheld by AG Mitchell on December 16, 1970.

With luck, when I get some more documents, I'll be able to produce a shorter and simpler version of this memo - with some clear conclusions. I don't think we are dealing with something as heavy as the destroyed Oswald note to Hosty, but I do feel this should be checked out.

There has, of course, been much written on the whole 544 Camp Street angle; if anyone needs further information or references, let me know.

97-74-1A5
Rec. 8/20/63
from
Jesse Core

FBI
Exh. 025
(P. 6 of 6)
PLH
A 12/18/67

HANDS OFF CUBA!

Join the Fair Play for Cuba Committee

NEW ORLEANS CHARTER
MEMBER BRANCH

Complaint Form
FD-71 (10-20-55)

Note: Hand print names legibly; handwriting satisfactory for remainder.

Subject's name and aliases FAIR PLAY FOR CUBA COMMITTEE	Address of subject c/o L. H. OSWALD 4907 MAGAZINE St. N.O., La.	Character of case REGISTRATION ~~STATE~~ ACT
Complainant RAMON HERNANDEZ	Complainant's address and telephone number 4412 EDEN ST., N.O. 861 - 0556	Complaint received ☒ Personal ☐ Telephonic Date 8/16/63 Time 3:40 PM

Complainant — Description

Race W	Sex ☒ Male	Height 5'10"	Hair Brown	Build Med	Birth date and Birthplace 9/3/40, HAVANA, CUBA
Age 23	☐ Female	Weight 175	Eyes Brown	Complexion Med.	

~~Scars, marks or other data~~
STUDENT - LOYOLA - ACCOUNTING - EVENING DIV
EMPLOYED - SPILSBURY, SIDNEY J. 823 PERDIDO #523-3822

Facts of complaint

Complainant brought in a "hand out" being distributed in fron of the Trade Mart, Camp Street by 5 white males 18 to 20 years in age wearing shirts. Complainant stated that the 5 appear to be college students and Americans. "Hand out" stated in part: "HANDS OFF CUBA! JOIN THE FAIR PLAY FOR CUBA COMMITTEE"

HERNANDEZ stated that he was imprisoned in Cuba for anti-Castro feelings. He volunteered to attend lectures and obtain literature as stated on "hand out" at "L. H. OSWALD, 4907 MAGAZINE ST., New Orleans"

HERNANDEZ advised that this office would not advise or direct him in this matter, and any action taken by him was of his own choice and responsibility.

97-74-66

SEARCHED ___ INDEXED ___
SERIALIZED ___ FILED ___
AUG 16 1963
FBI—NEW ORLEANS

Action Recommended File in 97-74 for info

(Agent)

Section 173